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## Letter dated 13 August 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On the eve of the Security Council consultations on Burundi, I should like to take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the members of the Council the evolution of the peace process in that country and to provide an update on the status of deployment of the African Mission in Burundi in the context of the efforts of the African Union to bring about peace in Burundi.

The signing of the Ceasefire Agreements on 7 October and 2 December 2002, respectively, between the Transitional Government of Burundi, on the one hand, the CNDD/FDD of Jean Bosco Ndayikengurukiye, the PALIPEHUTU/FNL of Alain Mugabarabona and CNDD/FDD of Pierre Nkurunziza, on the other, opened a new chapter in the peace process in Burundi. The provisions for the deployment of an African mission to oversee the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreements, as well as for the establishment of a joint ceasefire commission and joint liaison teams, were also important steps in the right direction.

As part of the efforts to consolidate those achievements and to create conditions conducive to the implementation of the ceasefire and deployment of the African Mission in Burundi, the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, meeting at its 88th ordinary session at the ambassadorial level, on 14 January 2003, authorized the deployment of a group of African Union observers to, among other things, facilitate communication between the parties and to carry out any other tasks as might be agreed with the parties to create and consolidate confidence among them. Forty-three military observers from Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and Tunisia have since been deployed.

Subsequently, the Central Organ, at its 7th ordinary session at the summit level and 91st ordinary session at the ambassadorial level, held in Addis Ababa, on 3 February and 2 April 2003, respectively, authorized the deployment of the African Mission in Burundi for an initial and renewable period of one year, pending the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission. The Mission's objectives are, among other things, to oversee the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreements of 7 October and 2 December 2002, to lend support to the disarmament and demobilization initiatives, to provide advice on the reintegration of combatants, to create conditions conducive to the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission and to contribute to the political and economic stability in Burundi.

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The size of the African Mission is about 3,500 troops, contributed by South Africa (the lead nation), Ethiopia and Mozambique. The budget estimate for the one-year operation is some $190 million.

More than four months after the mandate for the Mission was given by the Central Organ, one third of the force strength has now been deployed. Furthermore, the process of cantonment of the combatants of the armed movements of the CNDD-FDD of Jean Bosco Ndayikengurukiye and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL of Alain Mugabarabona has started. So far, more than 170 combatants from those two armed movements have been cantoned in the first cantonment site opened in the Muyange area, in the province of Bubanza, in the south-west of Burundi.

At this critical juncture, I should like to inform you that, in spite of the repeated appeals for assistance made by the African Union, the African Mission in Burundi is faced with serious financial and logistical constraints, which, if not urgently addressed, have the potential to undermine both the effectiveness of the Mission and the prospects for achieving lasting peace in Burundi.

It is precisely because of these constraints that Ethiopia and Mozambique, the other troop-contributing nations, have so far been unable to deploy the bulk of their troops. Similarly, the cantonment process has had to be temporarily halted.

The completion of the deployment of the African Mission and its effective functioning will offer a unique opportunity to achieve durable peace and national reconciliation in Burundi. In that regard, a greater demonstration of the tangible commitment of the international community is all the more urgent.

You may also wish to note that the recently concluded Regional Consultative Summit on Burundi, held in Dar es Salaam on 20 July 2003, as well as the subsequent visit to Bujumbura of a delegation from the Nkurunziza wing of the CNDD-FDD to discuss issues related to its participation in the work of the Joint Ceasefire Commission are encouraging signs as regards the prospects of peace in Burundi.

It would be a tragedy if the international community were to miss this window of opportunity in Burundi and thereby run the risk of facing a more complex situation for which the costs would be far greater than those required today for the deployment of the African Mission in Burundi.

During the session in Maputo of the Executive Council of the African Union, serious concerns were expressed over the grossly inadequate financial and logistical resources, which had considerably hampered the deployment of the African Mission. At the end of its deliberations, the Council, among other things, reiterated the Union's urgent appeal to member States, the United Nations and the wider international community to provide the financial and logistical support for the deployment and operationalization of the African Mission in Burundi in order to consolidate the progress achieved in the peace process in that country.

It is fervently hoped that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole, which have invested so much in the search of lasting peace in Burundi and the Great Lakes region in general, will bring their collective weight to bear in favour of this African initiative, which is being undertaken on behalf of the international community, and ensure that the required resources are mobilized.

In this respect, I should like to put on record the appreciation of the African Union for the adoption of the presidential statement of 18 December 2002 (S/PRST/2002/40) in which the Security Council, among other things, expressed its intention to support the immediate and full implementation of the Ceasefire Agreements.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council during the consultations on Burundi and circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Filipe **Chidumo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique
Representative of the Chairman of the African Union